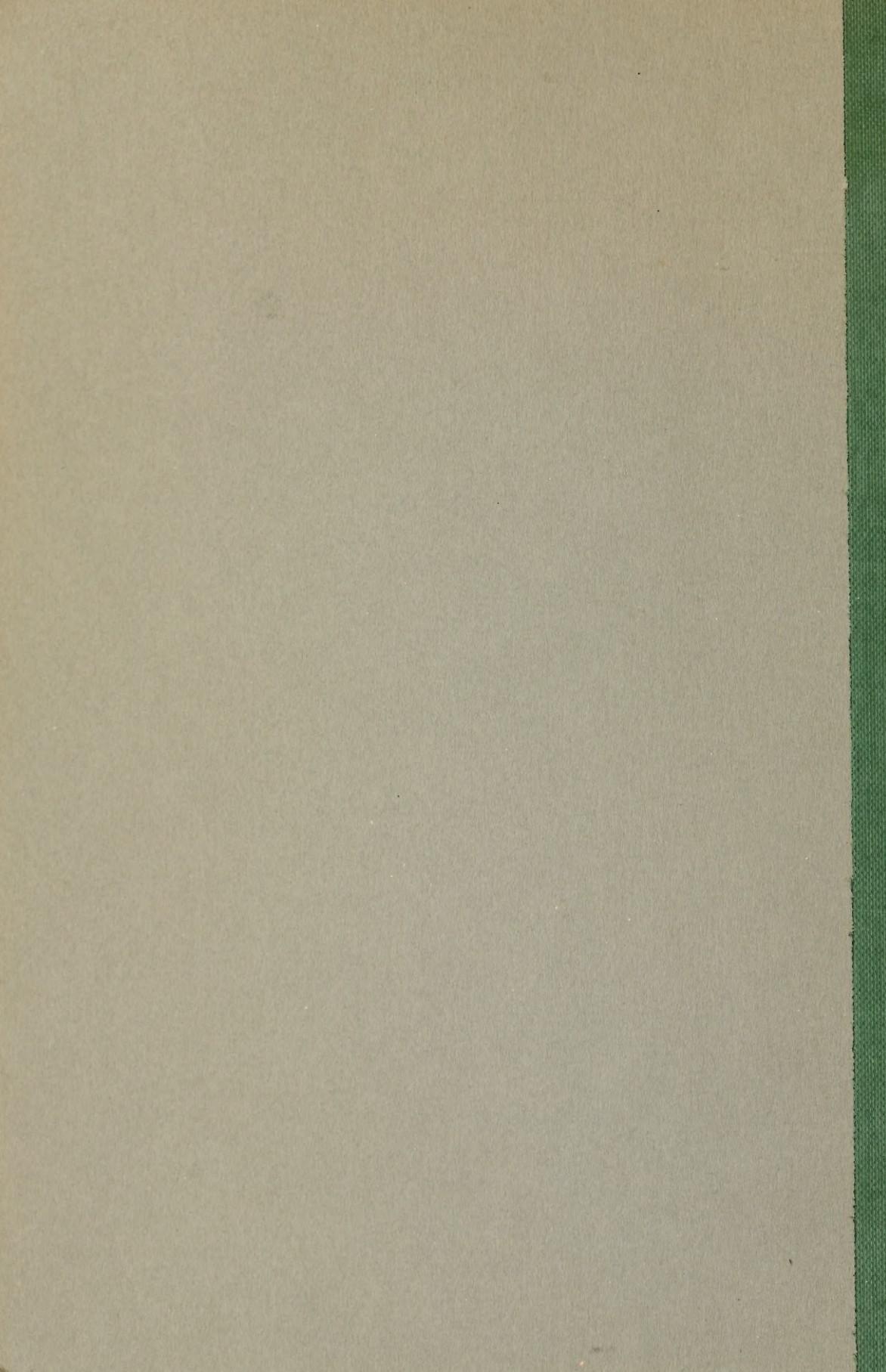


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CELTIC CONGRESS

EDINBURGH

MAY 24<sup>th</sup> to 28<sup>th</sup>, 1920

Inaugural Address

By the President

EDW. T. JOHN

Bangor  
JARVIS & FOSTER, PRINTERS  
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## Inaugural Address

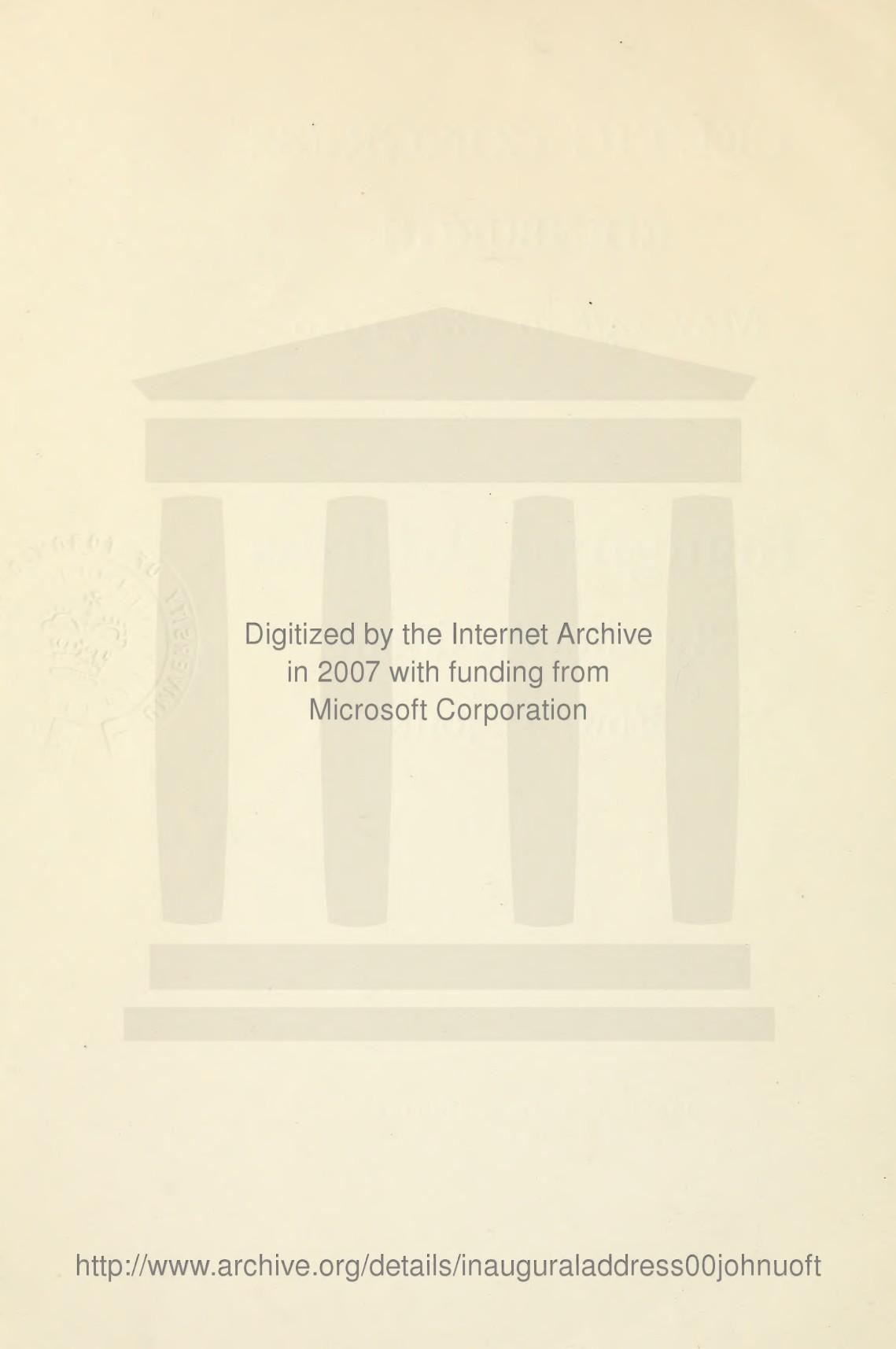
By the President

EDW. T. JOHN

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## The Celtic Congress--Edinburgh, 1920.

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### President's Address

I desire at the outset to express the warmest thanks of the Congress for all the trouble taken by the Scottish Committee in arranging so admirably for this, its initial gathering—the first, we hope, of a protracted series, eminently fruitful in promoting the highest wellbeing of Celts the world over, and in particular our concern that their labours should have been so greatly increased by the postponement of the Congress from October last by reason of the railway strike.

I fear, too, that in choosing a date partially coinciding with the holding of the General Assemblies of the Scottish Churches, we have added a further aggravation of their difficulties. In this connection, perhaps I may be permitted to wish well to the movement for the Union of the Presbyterian Churches of Scotland upon a national basis, which is apparently approaching a long desired consummation. In Wales, we are just emerging from a much more acute crisis, and to us all, perhaps the most astonishing feature of the new situation is the very strong Nationalist feeling which now obtains in a religious organisation which had been hitherto very generally regarded as more or less thoroughly Anglicised. Both the Episcopal Churches in the Principality have of late really shown conspicuous readiness to recognise the nationalist sentiment of Wales. In some senses there

is obviously less room and occasion for particularism in the realm of faith and religious organisation than in any other, but the Churches are not ill advised when they recognise the nation to be as inevitable and as salutary a unit as the family—that the inter-nationalism of the new Dispensation had to be preceded by a divinely ordained nationalism. Some of us are fully persuaded that the Celtic race has been, from very remote times, and remains to-day, charged with some such august mission and function.

We come to Scotland with eager anticipation, knowing full well its tradition of surpassing efficiency, recognising in its people a leading factor in the fraternity of Celtic nations—believing that, although in very regrettable degree, the use of your ancient Celtic tongue has been discontinued, the Scottish nation has yet remained essentially Celtic in race and temperament, as demonstrated pre-eminently by the prominence constantly accorded in its national life to the spiritual and to the intellectual—just as much by the one-time fervour of its Catholicism as by, in modern times, the staunchness of its adherence to Presbyterian Protestantism, by the perennial ardour of its devotion to letters and to the arts, its passion for the promotion of popular education, its protracted battle for political and spiritual independence, and its unswerving attachment at all times to the cause of human freedom and progress. In particular, we rejoice that we are permitted to assemble in your picturesque and historic capital the “Dineiddyn”—the “Mynyd Agned” of the early Welsh poets—peerless alike in distinction, beauty and charm, so intensely reminiscent of the most striking scenes in the national life of Scotland—

cherishing justly its unique tradition of literary and academic activity and achievement.

Edinburgh has previously welcomed what was then styled the Pan-Celtic Congress, and those of us responsible for the present gathering desire to acknowledge most warmly the zeal and enthusiasm of Lord Castletown and his associates in arranging what proved to be functions of much interest in Carnarvon, Edinburgh, and Dublin. It was the manifest value of those gatherings which prompted the National Union of Welsh Societies in the very difficult years of 1917 and 1918 at Birkenhead and Neath to call together their brother Celts with a view to paving the way for a resuscitation of the endeavour eventually to unite in one organisation Celts at home and abroad.

If we had met in October we had fully counted upon having with us Dr. E. C. Quiggin of Cambridge, and it is difficult to assess at all adequately the loss to Celtic erudition caused by his very premature decease. Ireland and Wales are deeply indebted to him for indefatigable research into their ancient literatures, and at Cambridge he was strenuously engaged in founding a great school of Celtic—a priceless acquisition even to that distinguished centre of learning.

In the Principality we have also to lament the death of Sir O. M. Edwards, whose services to Welsh literature, and to the elucidation of the history of Wales, coupled with untiring labours to secure for the Welsh language its proper place in the educational system of our country, have been of quite inestimable value.

While profoundly regretting thus the passing of these brilliant and devoted Celts, we rejoice that we shall

have amongst us on this occasion, in Dr. Douglas Hyde, one who is in many respects the very incarnation of the more modern Celtic awakening. It is a most felicitous occurrence that at a time when Ireland is plunged into almost acuter controversies than ever, we should be privileged to have with us a distinguished Irishman who so eminently represents all that is sanest, most inspiring and most ennobling in recent Irish movements.

We frankly come to Edinburgh, with all its intellectual prestige, in no spirit of "whispering humbleness." We regard ourselves as the modern representatives of an ancient and illustrious race, as singularly widespread in its distribution to-day as at the dawn of history, witnessing in the course of centuries the passing of "Giant forms of Empire on their way to ruin," yet ever remaining a most potent factor in the constitution and greatness of the leading powers of Western Europe and now of the younger democracies of Northern America and the Overseas Britains—proudly able to recall throughout the ages continuous and conspicuous contributions to the growth of civilisation and culture in all the most vital departments of human activity.

While I am abundantly content to leave the story of "The Celt in Ancient History" in the very capable hands of my erudite countryman—Dr. Hartwell Jones—I may venture to claim that the earlier stages of the dramatic part played by the Celt in the moving pageant of human progress, precede rather than coincide with the dawn of history in Western Europe, for, while the invading Roman was constantly constrained to bear eloquent testimony to the valour and military skill of the secular

chieftains and to the intellectual stature of the religious leaders of Gaul and Britain, we are also assured that, centuries earlier, by an alliance of Celt and Greek against the threatened domination of Phoenicia and Persia, "Celtica played no small part in preserving the Greek type of civilisation from being overwhelmed by the despotisms of the East—thus keeping alive in Europe the priceless seed of freedom and human culture."

Similarly with regard to Northern Europe, it is contended that the civilizing influence of Celtic culture is by no manner of means a modern development in Germany, but on the contrary, that "In the proto-historic period it was mainly through contact with the Celts that the Teutons became civilized. The intellectual dependence of the German is revealed for the period about 300 B.C. by the then existing civilisation, which was entirely Celtic." Even their subsequent choice of a literary language is said to have been determined by the greater assimilation by High German of Celtic words. Possibly the most conspicuous among the countless services rendered by the Celt to humanity is the gradual transformation of the ruthless Anglo Saxon marauders of Horsa's days, into the relatively reasonable and amenable Englishman of the twentieth century. At any rate, Henry Morley hazards the dictum that "But for early, frequent, and various contact with the Celtic race, Germanic England could not have produced a Shakespeare."

The reaction, too, of contact and conflict with the Celt upon the Romans themselves, might be fruitfully explored. Even in military matters, not only was the Roman cavalry recruited from Gaul but the manœuvres and technical expressions were in great part derived from

the Celts—"The British troops were reckoned alongside of the Illyrian, as the flower of the Army,"—the latter, also largely of Celtic origin. One audacious Scot avers that "as a Naval Power the Celts were far in advance of the Romans" and that the latter subsequently adopted the Celtic method of shipbuilding—apparently an early adumbration of the later greatness of the Clyde and Belfast. It is also unquestioned that Southern Britain by the development of agriculture and mining was not unprosperous. In addition to the earlier testimony of Pytheas "The Gallic orators of Diocletian's time praised the wealth of the fertile island," and often enough the Rhine legions received their corn from Britain. It is not without interest to note that in the politics of these early times, our remote ancestors took a thoroughly characteristic part, for Mommsen declares that "The overthrow of the Julio-Claudian dynasty emanated from a Celtic noble and began with a Celtic insurrection." In view of some features of the Celtic situation to-day, it is perhaps not inappropriate to recall the fact that the Cæsars regarded the Celt as "stubborn, ungovernable, inclined to insubordination, restless, refractory, in striking contrast to the Germanic Batavians—the latter obedient and useful subjects." The relatively advanced political development of the Celt was even then in evidence—"Communal centres, such as the Celtic system possessed in large numbers, were wanting to the German element—the Roman element being thus able to develop itself sooner and more fully in the Germanic East than in the Celtic regions." It is further declared to be "Almost a certainty that the Celtic language, whether in Roman territory or beyond it, had in or before this epoch under-

gone a certain regulation in the matter of writing, and could already at that time be written as it is written in the present day." Altogether the Celt had clearly then attained some appreciable measure of proficiency not only in military science and economic development, but in literary culture and speculative philosophy—the Pythagorean aspect of their views as to the immortality of the soul being undoubted though apparently not readily explicable.

There really seems to be more justification than is generally appreciated for Matthew Arnold's suggestion that the ancient poems of Wales provided evidence even in those distant periods of a still earlier culture—"stones" not of this building "but of an older architecture, greater, cunniger, more majestical."

It was perhaps natural that the Celt should next distinguish himself in the realm of matters spiritual—in theological polemics, in religious organisation and in missionary activity. It is claimed that "Early in the fifth century Britain had become the home of a distinctive type of Christianity"—it at any rate gave to the world a protagonist of the unquestioned learning and conspicuous moral energy of Pelagius, who assisted by the co-operation of "the eloquent Irish agitator Celestius" was responsible for one of the "most distinguished developments of Christianity."

In addition to the internal interchange of spiritual gifts in which Wales claims to have given to Ireland St. Patrick, and Ireland Columba to Scotland—Scotland in return claiming to have assisted in the educational equipment of St. David, the most striking feature of the early ages of the Celtic Church must undoubtedly be the in-

vasion of Europe by Celtic missionaries, in the main Irish, led by Columbanus, penetrating to the Netherlands, Bavaria, Switzerland, Southern France, and Northern Italy—a beneficent deluge of the most intrepid self-sacrifice and devotion. It is even claimed that evidence exists that Iceland was not untouched by Irish piety and learning.

Be this as it may, Renan declares:—“Few forms of Christianity have offered an ideal of Christian perfection so pure as the Celtic Church of the sixth, seventh, and eighth centuries. Nowhere perhaps has God been better worshipped in spirit than in the great communities of Iona, of Bangor, of Clonard, and of Lindisfarne.”

The Teuton Commentator Zimmer is scarcely less complimentary than the Breton Scholar, for he too avers that “From the sixth till the ninth century the Irish Church united in itself the learning and culture of both Christianity and Classic antiquity to an extent not to be found at that period anywhere else in the West,” emphasising its unceasing striving for “individual freedom and personal Christianity.” With regard to the Celtic Church of Wales, Mr. Willis Bund similarly states “No other Church has fought so stubbornly against ecclesiastical tyranny. No other Church has had so little credit for its struggle for religious freedom,” adding in reference to the controversy between the Welsh Bishops and Augustus that “Had Augustus succeeded, a dead level of uniformity would have spread over the country and altered the whole course of English history.” In spite of the apostolic animadversion, Professor Stokes declares of the Galatians “Nowhere did the Church of Christ find

a more loving and a more passionate devotion than among the Celts of Asia Minor."

It would be inappropriate and ill advised to refer to the more modern controversies between Catholic and Protestant, between Episcopalian and Presbyterian, but the intensity of the warfare waged constitutes indubitable proof of very profound conviction, and of the commanding position occupied by the spiritual in the mentality of the Celt in all ages.

We may, however, all rejoice that the missionary ardour of the early Celts has had its counterpart in modern times. As Scotland cherishes with pride the memory of the heroic David Livingstone, Robert Moffatt, and James Gilmour, so Wales dwells with affection upon the service rendered by its devoted sons to the Isles of the Southern Seas, to Madagascar, to Khassia, and latterly, in particular, to the vast population of China by the labours of two very remarkable Welshmen—Dr. Griffith John and Dr. Timothy Richard.

In leaving this dominant interest in the Celtic psychology, one may aptly quote Dr. Sophie Bryant :—“ In the outlook over humanity, as ranged in racial groups or nations, the Celtic peoples have, by some happy instinct, a fortunate, though perhaps seemingly unfortunate combination of circumstances, been shaping more than others for the realisation of the type of the Christian saint—the supreme practical mystic—and that, not here and there on the heroic scales, but in homely guise and quiet ways on the ordinary scale of common human nature,” in a word achieving the effective assimilation by the democracy of the spiritual graces. Those most intimately acquainted with the inner life of Brittany, of Ireland, of

Scotland and of Wales, will be least disposed to challenge the validity of the claim.

In passing it is not without interest to point out that while Scotland is painstakingly endeavouring to discover a path to the Reunion of its Churches, Wales in disassociating its Episcopal Church from the State, this year has seen accorded to it, with the willing assent of Canterbury, the full status of an Independent National Church—a very welcome assertion of the principle of nationality in matters spiritual. With all its religious fervour, the Celtic movement has, however, always been one of personal and national freedom and of intellectual emancipation, its earlier champions, Pelagius and Celestius, finding modern counterparts in this respect in Abelard and Renan.

The maximum service of the Celt to humanity is however to be found in the less controversial field of literature. In Wales we claim no little share in the contribution, always acknowledging however, with the utmost gratitude the fructuous co-operation of Brittany. Of the *Mabinogion*—“The pearl of Gaelic literature—the completest expression of the Cymric genius”—Renan claims that, exercising in the Middle Ages an immense influence, “it changed the current of European civilisation and imposed its poetical motives on nearly the whole of Christendom,” ultimately, according to Arnold, dowering even English poetry with much of its turn “for style, for melancholy, and for natural magic.”

While Ireland more or less consciously essayed the spiritual reconversion of Western Europe, Wales, in intimate association with Brittany, unconsciously embarked upon its intellectual penetration—and undoubtedly achieved the more complete reconquest, the Cymric

legends developing in the words of Albert Schulz into "A gigantic tree whose branches for nearly ten centuries spread over the whole of Europe."

The ancient literature of Ireland, so very considerable in volume, has apparently been less fortunate in affecting and shaping the literary activities of the nations ; William Sharp, however, contends that "the recent Celtic Renaissance—the rebirth of the Celtic genius in the brain of Anglo Celtic poets and the brotherhood of dreamers—is fundamentally the outcome of 'Ossian' and, immediately of the rising of the sap in the Irish nation."

In pleading for workers in the Celtic fields, the same writer states "When we come to examine the literature of the four great divisions of the Celtic race, a vast survey lies before us with innumerable vistas. In old Irish literature alone, there remain whole tracts and even regions of unexploited land."

Of Scotland it is said "The Gaelic tongue has blessed the land with names of expressive and poetic signification and graceful cadence—the Celtic blood has gifted Scottish literature with a passion, a pathos and a beauty that can never cease to charm."

It is, however, of the first importance to appreciate that the glory of Celtic literature lies by no means exclusively in its remoter achievements—on the contrary Professor Zimmer has asserted that :—"No literature is more beautiful than the modern Celtic literature."

All Celts may well apply to themselves Mr. Alfred Nutt's advice to Ireland :—"The faithful and veracious study of your literature in its entirety is pre-eminently important for the artistic future of your race."

It is, however, often suggested that the Celts, ancient and modern alike, have little aptitude for art. On the other hand experts declare that late researches prove "Early Celtic Art to have attained astonishing perfection, beauty and delicacy, evolving from the simplest elements effects of the most exquisite grace and beauty. It was unique—Celtic hands only knew how to create it and on none but Celtic soil did it flourish. In the sixth century the Celtic Art faculty as witnessed by its relics, had developed marvellous perfection—nothing analogous to it existed either at a contemporary or an earlier date in the art of Byzantium and Italy." We are further assured "That a thousand years before the days of St. Columba Ireland was already claiming an European position as a centre of metallurgical industry and of the goldsmith's craft in particular. Such masterpieces as 'The Cross of Cong,' the 'Chalice of Ardagh,' and the examples of illuminative art in the books of Durrow and Kells, recalled the time when the Irish missionaries were exercising a humanising influence over the Teutonic conquerors of the Roman Empire, and diffusing a style of illumination which was in a large measure the outgrowth and translation of a peculiar heirloom of the Celtic race, the art of enamel work."

In modern art Scottish painters have clearly formed a national school, thoroughly individual and well defined—largely founded by Henry Raeburn and David Wilkie, followed by many notable successors, including Orchardson, Pettie, MacTaggart and MacWhirter. Ireland it is understood claims Sir John Lavery, in spite of his close association with Glasgow.

While Wales cannot rival Scotland and Ireland in

this connection it, too, has its notable sons, ranging from John Gibson and Richard Wilson, the father of English landscape painting—to Burne Jones, G. F. Watts, Frank Brangwyn, B. Williams Leader and Augustus John—nor do we estimate lightly the work of Owen Jones, the author of “The Grammar of Ornament,” and the genius as sculptors of Sir Goscombe John and Havard Thomas.

In Architecture, ancient and modern, the Celtic countries have each produced much of abiding charm and interest. It is greatly to be hoped that whatever resources the race to-day commands in this respect, may be drawn upon unreservedly in this coming period of constructional activity—with housing so much the topic of the day, it may not be inopportune to quote an English writer, commenting some 90 years ago on the cottages of rural Glamorganshire.

“The antiquity of the cottages is a strongly marked feature in Glamorganshire—many probably as ancient as the castles to which they are attached—the pointed doorways and windows sometimes evince the date, and though Welsh towns are censured for the inelegance and inconvenience of their houses, the direct reverse is the fact with respect to the habitations of the peasantry here. These ancient Gothic cottages have a venerable exterior and a proportion of interior rooms with comfort and security from the elements, rarely enjoyed by the peasantry of other parts. In many cases it may be truly said the labourer is better lodged than his employer.”

A greatly loved and distinguished country man of mine, Mr. T. E. Ellis, once enquired “Is there a latent capacity in the Welsh people for the elevation of taste and for growing excellence in architecture, as there un-

doubtedly is in Music," to which enquiry he replied, "I have no hesitation in affirming that there is. There is practically unanimity that the finest and the most fruitful epoch of building was the rise of what is called Gothic Architecture in the 12th and 13th centuries—the rise of this great architecture in Europe was mainly the awakening of the ancient Gallic and Celtic spirit of Northern and Western France. In Tintern and Valle Crucis, in Abbey Cwm Hir and Strata Florida, there can still be seen evidence of the richness of detail and the wealth of decorative power which are instinct in the whole Celtic people."

To turn to the traditional music of the Celtic countries, this is admittedly of notable beauty—oft times strangely moving and, in Wales, we are assured, too, capable of providing the inspiration and foundation of a school of National music comparable with the fascinating achievement of Modern Russia—the contention also of Dr. Walford Davies that awakened interest in Folk melody is entirely consonant with harmonic progress, no doubt applies in equal degree to Brittany, Ireland and Scotland.

It would, however, be tedious as superfluous to review the Acts of the Celts in all times, their versatility being quite as conspicuous as their ubiquity. Eminent as Scotland is in literature, art and philosophy, you are also responsible for such mundane things as the steam engine and the Nasmyth steam hammer, though Cornwall in the person of Richard Trevithick somewhat challenges the former claim—your genius ranges from "Ossian," Burns, and Scott, through a brilliant galaxy of divines and philosophers, to scientists of the calibre of Lord Kelvin

and Sir William Ramsay. In Wales also we have not been too completely absorbed in poetry and theology to be wholly unmindful of the claims of industry and science as the names of Sir William Henry Preece and David Edward Hughes in electrical science, Richard Roberts in the spinning industry, and Sidney Gilchrist Thomas in the manufacture of steel, sufficiently demonstrate. Perhaps the gigantic fortune of your notable countryman, the late Mr. Andrew Carnegie, is the most striking instance of a successful Scots-Cymric alliance, where the commercial acumen of the Scotsman worked wonders, when allied to and based upon the Titanic energy, the volcanic vigour, of that forceful metallurgist, Captain William Jones. But we are not here to dwell upon a past, however, opulent in honourable tradition and meritorious record, on the contrary we desire to envisage a future pregnant with potentialities of unique usefulness—ever discharging a very special function in the work of civilization.

It may well be asked what good can come out of the Nazareth of Celtic cultural propaganda. To our mind, it was never more urgently needed. The attitude of the world to-day is one of profound reaction from the idealism which inspired the unimaginable sacrifice of the last five years. Materialism reigns rampant—increased production of material wealth being well nigh the sole and all sufficing gospel of publicists of every description, it being rarely recognised that even maximum industrial productiveness is primarily a problem of the spirit.

The real need of the age is most assuredly not so much the due appreciation of material and materialist considerations, so readily appealing to the Saxon and Teuton spirit and tradition, but rather the sympathy and

comprehension which have ever been the intuition and instinct of the Celt. In very truth, whether you have regard to the world wide unrest of labour, the intransigence of Ireland, the discontents of Egypt and of India, the confusion of Eastern Europe from the Baltic to the Balkans, and the unutterable chaos of Russia, it will eventually be perceived that they will, all alike, yield only to that spirit of understanding and fraternity which has ever been the heritage of the Celtic race.

It is with some such fundamental conception of the mission of the Celt as essentially unifying, that we are concerned to bring about the co-operation of the Celtic peoples—marked as may be the diversities of their gifts and circumstances. We submit that we are curiously well placed to affect the course of human progress—in the United Kingdom we are much too considerable a factor to be in any way negligible; in the United States all are acutely conscious of the weight and power of 15,000,000 people of Irish extraction, not to speak of the sons and daughters of Alban and of Cambria; the Overseas Dominions at every turn bear testimony to Scottish industry, integrity, and competence; while Brittany by reason, in equal degrees of the intellectual brilliance of so many of her sons, the piety, devotion, courage and sacrifice of her people, is abundantly entitled to speak with authority in the counsels of the great Gallic nation, itself so largely Celtic in its physical basis.

Although Celtia Overseas may not be represented very strongly on this occasion, it is to be hoped that the Congress will not fail to appreciate adequately the greatness alike in numbers, character and achievement of the Celts of the Dispersion —ever remembering Acton's vivid

phrase that "Exile is the nursery of nationality," an aphorism constantly demonstrated by such incidents in Celtic experience as the holding of Gaelic classes in New Zealand, by the Gaelic speaking contingent in the recent conflict from Nova Scotia and Cape Breton, by the story of Pennsylvania and its Merion tract, by the appellation of the great Dominion of New South Wales, by the continued existence and prosperity of the Welsh Colony in the Chuput Valley in distant Patagonia, by recurring Cymric, Irish, and Scottish reunions ranging from Calcutta to Seattle.

To command the interest of Celts so variously situated, the programme and policy of the Congress needs to be Catholic and comprehensive to a degree, resolutely avoiding all narrow exclusions, inspired by the Welsh aphorism "Rhydd i bawb ei farn, ac i bob barn ei llafar"—surely ever ready to consider and discuss the aspirations and the needs of the Celtic peoples, wheresoever placed, howsoever situated—obviously taking executive action only where some substantial approach to unanimity exists.

It is doubtless on this ground that our preliminary gatherings have been devoted mainly to purely cultural considerations. In this respect, we in Wales particularly desire to express our appreciation of the work of past Scottish scholars, such as Dr. Skene in his "Four Ancient Books of Wales," and Dr. John Strachan in his "Introduction to early Welsh,"—the remembrance of the personality, as well as the work of the latter, is affectionately cherished by Welshmen associated with him in his work at Manchester. We are equally impressed by the vigour and the value of the labours of Dr. Watson and his co-adjutors in recent years, and sincerely trust

that with the added facilities now possible, and your recent ad hoc educational general election, the utilisation of your schools, primary and secondary, for the promotion of your indigenous Gaelic culture, may progress apace. Whatever the judgment of Scotland may be, in Wales we are profoundly convinced that a satisfactory educational system, frankly fashioning coming generations upon the lines of our cherished Cymric culture, can only be secured through the establishment of complete national self-government. Ireland is in the main of the same opinion—Brittany doubtless has similar aspirations, though possibly less accentuated.

The permanent task of the Congress is surely first to see that in every Celtic Area, wheresoever Celts in appreciable numbers assemble, the fullest facilities are provided for the exhaustive study and exposition of the Celtic languages and literatures, and of the dramatic story of the Celtic race, and, in like manner, to ensure that in the educational systems of England, the Overseas Dominions, the United States, and France, the very material contribution of the Celtic peoples to the literature, history and development of Western civilization be adequately appreciated, effectually and faithfully expounded and emphasised, a vista of activity and watchful persistence, sufficient to tax the energies of the most enthusiastic.

Advantage should in particular be taken of the present very decided movement in the direction of developing adult education and extra mural University activities. The experts who are advising the Government on the educational side of reconstruction, contemplate in this connection new departures of much importance

enjoying substantial resources, unless their proposals are materially modified by the very belated zeal for economy now so loudly proclaimed. In these directions and in the multiplication and expansion of Language Summer Schools and Colleges, much can be achieved.

The dissemination of knowledge of matters Celtic, through the press in its various forms, the strengthening of magazine literature in our ancient tongues, the support and encouragement of all forms of Celtic literary activity, are matters richly deserving comprehensive review and vigorous action by the Congress, for happily modern Celtic literature maintains the highest traditions of a very notable past.

It is further for the Congress to consider whether its contribution to the task of Reconstruction is to be purely literary, whether, in addition to its labours in the realm of languages, literature, and history, it will also seek to stimulate art, painting, sculpture, architecture, music and the drama, on lines instinct with all the grace and beauty of the Celtic tradition—whether it will have regard in any way to the general culture and social wellbeing of the Celt at home and abroad.

In our several countries we are faced by widely differing problems. In Wales our difficulty is the considerable immigrant element—nearly one-fifth of the entire population—we are audaciously aspiring to rouse in the incoming Saxon some appreciation of our history and literature, and eventually, through the machinery of our schools, to promote and to ensure the habitual use of our ancient tongue by the mass of the community.

In Scotland, you have quite another trouble. Prior to the war, emigration was most gravely depleting rural

Scotland—Scotland can scarcely be content that the pick of her sons and daughters should again leave for distant lands—undoubtedly there rendering invaluable service to their day and generation. Ireland, on the other hand, is learning to retain her young people with undoubtedly most disconcerting results for her perplexed rulers. Apart, however, from this matter of migration overseas, it is surely a very doubtful good that the rural population of the Celtic speaking counties in our several countries should be constantly in course of transfer from an intellectual and spiritual environment, predominantly Celtic in character, to the squalor—material, mental, and moral—which unhappily so habitually characterises our congested and Anglicised industrial areas. The Celtic nations obviously have a most practical interest in the rebuilding of the rural life of all the Celtic countries. The Celtic cultural movement is thus really constrained to have an economic phase, if it is to safeguard effectually even the intellectual and spiritual freedom of those who most loyally adhere to their indigenous Celtic culture.

It may indeed be not unfitting to enquire whether any moral purpose pertains to the Celtic movement, particularly at a juncture in the world's history so inexpressibly grave—pregnant with the doom of generations unborn—happily also equally charged with the potentiality of a new international order, wherein nations shall no longer wage war. It is inconceivable that in this connection the Celt has no message, no mission, no evangel. Henry Richard, labouring fifty years ago for his ideal of International Arbitration thought very much otherwise.

None are better entitled by the bitter experience of centuries of oppression—by complete immunity from

designs of territorial aggrandisement—from the passion for domination—to plead for the complete elimination of the element of physical force from the solution of all problems of national and international government. In regarding this, as the first and foremost of Celtic ideals, we will prove profoundly faithful to the oldest and the most fundamental tradition of our race. The penetrating Eisteddfodic enquiry “A oes heddwch?” picturesquely indicates the abiding sense of the utter incompatibility of warfare with the practice of the gentler arts of poetry and song. It is, of course, equally obvious that in the disappearance of every description of military consideration lies the maximum hope for the absolutely unfettered development of the minor nationalities. Great Empires may still cherish the illusion that the retention of armaments is essential to their wellbeing, but it is quite otherwise with the smaller nations—their paramount interest lies in the complete and mutual abandonment of all manner of military, naval, and hostile aerial equipment.

It is perhaps difficult to conceive an organisation better fitted to consider dispassionately the philosophic problem of the interactions of internationalism and nationalism, than an aggregation of the Celts of the world—so habitually practising a concurrent and triple loyalty to nationality, to the State, and to the race—at once intensely nationalist and perfervidly cosmopolitan. We claim that Celtic nationalism—always aiming at achieving the highest standards of individual, communal, and national rectitude, at securing the physical and social wellbeing of the people and their maximum intellectual growth and progress—never menaces in any way any other nation.

We are constrained to claim that the Celt has never

regarded liberty—the right of national self-government—as a dangerous poison to be prescribed in homœopathic doses, but rather as simultaneously a sedative and a stimulant, abating all the heated disorders of the body politic, and endowing with fresh vigour every salutary impulse.

In the present economic condition of the United Kingdom—parlous to a degree—it will shortly be discovered that the remedy lies not in bureaucratic centralisation, but rather in the most drastic and completely democratic decentralisation.

It is after all but the dictate of common sense that the perplexed and perturbed predominant partner will probably most quickly and effectually diminish its manifold difficulties by inviting Ireland, Scotland, and Wales, each to work out its own salvation in its own particular way. No one will challenge the title and entire competence of Scotland to discharge sagaciously the widest functions of self-government. Wales may rise to the supreme act of national faith—finally disclaiming all reliance upon force whatsoever—wholly content to leave its future to Providence, operating, through the League of Nations as its human instrument. We have yet to learn in what measure Brittany may desire to modify the overcentralisation of French governmental methods. As regards Ireland, all will surely endorse the aspiration of the Prime Minister for the early disappearance of the “long drawn wretched misunderstanding between Ireland and the rest of the United Kingdom,” though, to my mind, there has been a very large measure of agreement during the last fifty years between the democracies of

Scotland and of Wales and the mass of the people of Ireland.

The Prime Minister preceded this reference by expressing the hope that

"Great armaments will disappear not only in Germany—otherwise millions of gallant men will have bled in vain."

The interaction of the two principles is most notable—a satisfactory international order can only be effected through the maximum observation of the legitimate claims of nationalism—the recognition of the claims of nationality can be most readily secured and maintained by the complete elimination of force from the machinery of international relations. With a world so utterly distraught it remains still possible on these lines, and on these lines alone, to anticipate the early dawn of better days.

"O Celt, at home and o'er the Sea  
The bond is loosed—the poor are free,  
The world's great future rests with thee.

Till the soil—bid cities rise,  
Be strong, O Celt—be rich, be wise ;  
But still with those divine grave eyes  
Respect the realm of Mysteries,"

wherein thy soul has ever had its abiding place and habitation.







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